

Course Syllabus

01:959:315: Study Abroad: Law, Justice and Rights in Bolivia

Prof. Daniel M. Goldstein

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Cochabamba, Bolivia

Course Description

How does law work in Latin America? What does “justice” mean in other cultural contexts? What are “rights,” and how are they understood and practiced in societies very different from our own? These are some of the themes that this course will explore. Conducted in the city of Cochabamba, Bolivia during the summer of 2010, this course (worth a total of 9 credits in Anthropology, Latin American Studies, and Spanish) will focus on topics related to the beliefs about and realities of justice and rights in Bolivian society. Through readings, lectures, discussions, informal meetings, and direct participation, students will have the opportunity to learn first-hand about the workings of the Bolivian legal system, the meanings of justice, and the practice of rights by poor, indigenous people. Students will work with human rights advocates, to develop a sense of what human rights promotion entails in Latin America, while working themselves to promote knowledge of human rights in Bolivian communities. Additionally, students will be trained in anthropological methods and conduct independent research, while also engaging in intensive language study in either Spanish or Quechua.

This study abroad program is thus at once an academic course, a field school in Cultural Anthropology, a language training, and a service-learning program in urban Bolivia. It takes its orientation from an engaged anthropology, which holds that anthropology can take a critical and problem-solving approach to local and global issues, using the insights and tools of the discipline to work closely with local communities, helping people to understand and transform their social realities. Such an approach is increasingly necessary in a globalizing world, in which academic anthropologists are regularly called upon by their field research collaborators to participate actively in confronting the real challenges that local communities face. This is particularly the case in Andean South America, where notions of reciprocity have historically provided the basic logic of cultural beliefs and practices. Anthropologists seeking to do field research in such a context have no choice but to be engaged anthropologists, sharing their insights, experience, and energy with the people who have shared their knowledge, experience, and lives with them.

In addition to coursework on topics of the history, politics, and culture of Bolivia and the issues of law and justice in that country and the Latin American region, the field school/service-learning program will focus on the research experience in Cochabamba, providing students with the tools and opportunities to conduct independent anthropological field research in a local community, while engaging with that community on a personal, daily level. Students will receive instruction in standard anthropological field techniques, which they will put into practice through a variety of exercises in anthropological research. As part of their research work, students will also work in a service capacity alongside local community residents, contributing something to local life in exchange for the opportunity to study and research in the community. Students will also do one-on-one language study with an individual tutor in the language of their choice.

Course Objectives and Expectations

This course is designed as part of a field school/study abroad program, in which students will learn about the realities of a Latin American society through direct participation and interaction with people, as well as by readings, discussions and regular classroom meetings. My objectives for this course are that students not only learn about the topics of law, justice and rights, but that they develop a deep understanding of what it is like to live in another society, where much of their taken-for-granted assumptions about social life are challenged on a fundamental level. As in any course whose basis is the discipline of Cultural Anthropology, I want students to appreciate the lack of clear-cut answers to daily and deeply structural social problems, and be willing to accept that ambiguity, more often than clarity, is the result of social encounters and analysis. I expect students to learn some of the techniques of anthropological research and to apply those techniques in preparing their assignments for the course. More specifically, my objectives and expectations for the course are that students:

- learn about the Bolivian justice system, and the operation of the law in Latin America more generally, understanding the realities and consequences of legal and social practice in a context of globalization;
- do all the assigned readings and writing projects by the dates due, as they would in any regular class at their home institutions;
- develop a comparative perspective on the law and how justice operates between different societies;
- improve their Spanish or Quechua language skills through daily conversations;
- learn the basic techniques of anthropological field research through classroom discussion and hands-on practical application;
- gain an understanding of the process of developing an ethnographic analysis, from arrival in the field, through data collection, to writing up of results;
- participate wholeheartedly in service projects dedicated to helping the communities in which we will work;
- come to understand the realities of life in Bolivia, with a special emphasis on the problems that lack of access to the law has created for local families and communities;
- come to appreciate the usefulness of anthropology for studying and engaging with people and communities different from what is familiar to them;
- face the challenges of life in a foreign culture with humor and graciousness, showing a respect for local customs and a maturity to deal with the inevitable hardships that will arise; and
- comport themselves as ambassadors for their university and their country, remembering at all times that they are guests in another land.

Requirements and Grading

1. Attendance Class will meet once per week for two to three hours during the first month of the program. We will also meet as a group once per week for reflection on and discussion of our field and service experiences. In addition, several events outside of class will be scheduled each week; these may include visits to meet with justice professionals, interviews with community residents, and participation in public events. Attendance at every class

meeting, group outing or event is mandatory, unless excused by illness. Tardiness will not be tolerated – tardies and unexcused absences will reduce your final course grade.

In addition to the above, we will devote two to three periods each week to service and research-related activities in the study communities in which we will be working. Class will meet every Sunday for research practice and service work. Sunday is the best day to be in the field communities, as this is the day when everyone is home from work, public events are held, and people are most accessible for interviewing or service collaboration. Students wishing to attend Christian religious services may do so in the local community.

2. Reading and participation Please do all the assigned readings for each class meeting. Being prepared for class is necessary for full comprehension of the lectures and engaged participation in class discussions. Participation involves being alert and taking notes during lectures; asking questions to clarify points of misunderstanding; engaging actively in small-group activities; and contributing meaningfully and often to discussions. Keeping up with the readings is the best way to be sure you are ready to participate. Photocopies of all readings (apart from the two books listed below) will be provided.

The following books are required for purchase:

Ben Kohl and Linda Farthing, *Impasse in Bolivia: Neoliberal Hegemony and Popular Resistance* (Zed Books, 2006).

Goldstein, Daniel M. *The Spectacular City: Violence and Performance in Urban Bolivia* (Duke, 2004).

3. Research and Service Research practice and service work will go hand in hand in this course. Working with someone offers an ideal occasion to get to know them, establish rapport, and begin asking questions that interest you. As you work alongside local people, you will come to learn about their problems and difficulties, and help think of ways to resolve them. Service activities for this program are described below. Students will be expected to spend a minimum of 40 hours in research and service during the course of the six-week program.
4. Assignments and Evaluation Assignments should be typed, double-spaced, and submitted by email or in hard copy format on the dates indicated. The grades will be determined on the following bases, out of 100 total points:
 - a. Participation (40 points) – Students are expected to attend and participate in all meetings and class events, including research and service activities.
 - b. Kohl and Farthing Quiz (5 points) – This quiz will be given at the first class meeting.
 - c. Field Diary (15 points) – You will keep a daily field diary, in which you reflect on your experiences doing fieldwork and service. I will collect these diaries at the end of the program. In addition, you will be called upon to share your observations and reflections verbally in weekly group discussions.
 - d. Weekly Assignments (10 points each, 40 points total) – I will review and evaluate the data you collect in the field submitted as weekly assignments, described below.

5. Language All readings, writing, and classroom discussion for this course will be in English, unless you are taking the course for Spanish credit, in which case written assignments must be completed in Spanish. Most of our field trips, events and activities will be in Spanish. Students will each have two, 1.5 hour private classes in either Spanish or Quechua each week. You will be given a pre-test (for Spanish classes) and a post-test, which should show measurable improvement and upon which your grade in language class will be based.
6. Disciplinary policy There will be a zero tolerance policy for student misbehavior while on this trip. Bolivia is generally a socially conservative society, and you should conduct yourselves accordingly. While I will not be supervising your behavior outside of class activities, any reports of students getting into trouble with host families or local authorities will result in disciplinary action, possibly including the student returning home immediately and receiving a failing grade in the class. I also expect you to know and abide by the Rutgers University academic honesty policy in preparing your work for this course.

La Fundación Pro Justicia

Helping to coordinate this study abroad program is a group of Bolivian researchers and development professionals who together have formed La Fundación Pro Justicia, a non-governmental organization devoted to improving access to justice for poor and marginalized urban Bolivians. The members of Pro Justicia will help to coordinate events, supervise and facilitate research, and coordinate service activities in the study communities. You should regard them as resources but treat them with the respect you would show a professor.

Course Schedule

For each week of the program, the syllabus lists the research activities, readings, and written or other assignments students are expected to complete in the course of that week. Readings should be completed by, and written assignments are due at the time of our class meeting.

Prior to the Course

Please read Kohl and Farthing's *Impasse in Bolivia* prior to arriving in Cochabamba. This book provides an account of recent events in Bolivia that have had an impact on the social reality you will be observing and living in during your stay. Please remember that you are traveling as anthropologists, not as tourists, and have to prepare yourselves to understand recent Bolivian political and economic history so that you can have an informed perspective on contemporary Bolivian reality.

Week 1 (Monday 7/5) – Bolivian Political Life/Arrival and Orientation/Mapping

Discussion this week will be based on your reading of Kohl and Farthing; it will focus on Bolivian political history, the impacts of neoliberal reform on Bolivian society, and the emergence and rise to power of Bolivian social movements in recent years. In the methods section, students will learn about the challenges of beginning fieldwork, including site selection, obtaining permissions, establishing a local presence, building rapport, ethical issues, gender considerations, and the relationship between field research and community service. A discussion of the history of ethnographic field research will be included. Students will prepare to begin

working with local consultants, to become oriented to the sites in which they are doing service. Understanding space, home design, employment, and urban social dynamics will be a focus. A copy of the readings for this week will be distributed at orientation.

- Reading:* 1) Crane, Julia G., and Michael V. Angrosino, "Beginning Fieldwork," from *Field Projects in Anthropology*, pp. 13-22.
2) Hammersley, Martyn, and Paul Atkinson. "Field Relations," from *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, pp. 77-104.

We will check your field diaries in class today – diaries will be rechecked and graded at the end of the program. We will also have the quiz on Kohl and Farthing today.

Week Two (Monday 7/12) – Andean Culture and Society/ Diagramming Kinship

Class this week will provide an orientation to the culture and society of Andean peoples, including traditional beliefs and practices, family life, gender and sexuality, work and household economy, and social organization. Students will learn practice the techniques of kinship diagramming, and in the coming week will work closely with individual field consultants to prepare a kinship diagram that not only illustrates family patterns but gives a sense of the rural-urban diaspora in Bolivia.

- Reading:* 1) Allen, Catherine J. "To Be Quechua: The Symbolism of Coca Chewing in Highland Peru."
2) Goldstein, *Spectacular City*, Intro and Chapter 1.

Assignment 1: Socially significant map (due in class today)

Week Three (Monday 7/19) – Cochabamba and Urban Life/ Participant-Observation

Bolivia, formerly one of the most rural countries in Latin America, is now highly urbanized. This process of migration and urbanization has transformed Bolivian society, as it has transformed many other countries in Latin America. We will explore this process, focusing on the growth of Cochabamba, its marginal communities, and the nature of urban life today in Bolivia. In methods, students will be instructed in the arts of observation and participation, the kinds of data that can be acquired, and ways to interpret observations. Attention will be given to skills of taking scratch notes and writing field notes.

- Reading:* 1) DeWalt, Kathleen et al. "Participant Observation." In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 259-300
2) Goldstein, chapters 2 and 3

Assignment 2: Kinship diagram (due in class today)

Week Four (Monday 7/26) – Justice and the Law/ Interviewing

As Bolivia has experienced urbanization and a turn to neoliberalism over the last 30 years, problems of income inequality, differential access to justice, and social marginalization have emerged as key social problems. We will read about these issues, and how the legal system operates in a society characterized by marked social inequities, including the unequal distribution

of citizenship rights. In methods, we will study and practice techniques of unstructured, semi-structured, and focus group interviewing. Strategies of identifying interview subjects, preparing an interview guide, recording and transcription techniques, and other related concerns will be discussed and practiced.

Reading: 1) Goldstein, chapters 4 and 5
2) Levy, Robert I., and Douglas W. Hollan. "Person-Centered Interviewing and Observation." In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 333-364.

Assignment 3: Fieldnotes (due in class today)

Week Five (Friday 7/30) – Human Rights in Transnational Perspective

What are human rights and are they always a universal good? We will explore the transnational concept of human rights and explore their application locally in Cochabamba, to understand the relative nature of rights in different social contexts. In methods, we will discuss ways to identify key themes in research, and transforming data into written text. We will also discuss questions of ethnographic writing, and how anthropologists make choices about representation of ethnographic information.

Reading: 1) Goldstein, Daniel. 2005. Flexible Justice: Neoliberal Violence and Self-Help Security in Bolivia. *Critique of Anthropology* 25:389-411.
2) Albro, Robert. "'The Water is Ours, Carajo!' Deep Citizenship in Bolivia's Water War."

Assignment 4: Interview (due in class today)
FIELD DIARY DUE TODAY!

Assignments in Ethnographic Research

Keeping a field diary (15 points)

Beginning even before your arrival in Cochabamba, start keeping a daily field diary. This diary should be the place where you record your observations and experiences of your time in Bolivia, as well as your personal reactions to what you are observing and experiencing. Use the diary to reflect on your experiences and relate them to what you are reading about and discussing in the course. You will continue to keep this field diary throughout the course of this program. During your first week, be sure to consider the following questions: What are your reactions to your new reality in Bolivia? What things strike you as unfamiliar and unexpected? What things seem familiar? How are you adjusting to your homestay situation, working with a new group of students, and navigating a strange city? How does what you've seen so far match or conflict with your prior expectations? How do your prior fears seem now, and what new concerns have arisen? Write at least five pages each week in your journal, and be prepared to present a section publicly in our group reflection meetings (usually held on Friday evenings).

Assignment 1: Socially significant map (10 points)

With the assistance of a local “map partner,” create a socially significant map. You may choose to focus on an area as small as one room or building, or as large as a marketplace, a downtown street, an entire neighborhood, or the entire city of Cochabamba. The scale of the project is up to you and your map partner to decide. Similarly, the style and formatting of the map are for you to determine. If you are artistic, you might want to draw selected areas using paint or other art supplies. If you are more linearly inclined, you might choose to use graph paper and attempt to sketch out part or all of your area to scale. The map might even be three-dimensional. Feel free to use regular street maps or other diagrams as aids, but remember: you are supposed to produce something different and much more significant than a mere street map. Let your map partner guide you to what s/he feels is the heart of the area, or walk through a building and let her/him tell you what used to be where in the past. Your map should label those spaces or locations that are significant to your map partner and the community in which s/he lives or works. Listen to how your map partner describes the personal and social significance of the place, then use your imagination to capture that significance as accurately as possible. Hand in the map, and a 2-3 page (double-spaced) explanation of what makes this map socially significant for your map partner.

Assignment 2: Kinship Diagram (10 points)

In this assignment you will be following the instructions in Crane and Angrosino's chapter “Charting Kinship.” You might choose to diagram the kinship relations of a your map partner from Assignment 2, or select another person whom you know in your field site. In any case, choose someone with whom you feel comfortable, and who will be willing to sit with you for as long as it takes to map out their family tree. Make sure to explain the purpose of this activity, and offer to share the results of it with your consultant at the end. In your chart, be sure to include the following information: kin terms and relationships; personal names, ages, professions, and interesting characteristics (if any) of people on the chart; and places of origin and residence of

those on the chart. This last point is particularly important, as it will help you to identify the personal trajectory of this individual and her/his family, and to understand where spatially they are situated in Bolivia and how this has changed over time. Feel free to be as artistic as you would like to be, using whatever media you wish and creating as large a chart as is necessary. In addition to the chart, write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) reflection on the things you learned through this activity, what you can understand about spatial mobility in Bolivia, and comment on the experience of doing the research itself.

Assignment 3: Fieldnotes (10 points)

By this point, you should have developed enough of a relationship with someone in your service setting to be able to do this assignment with them. For this assignment, you will write and submit 3-5 pages of written fieldnotes, based on your participant-observation. For your participant-observation, choose either an event or a practice to observe. If you choose to study an event, identify and attend a public event – a meeting, a performance, a religious service, a class – in which your key consultants are involved. If you choose a practice, observe someone at work or engaged in some kind of specialized activity, like making a craft or cooking a meal. In either case, observe and participate in the event or activity as much as possible, while asking questions of your consultants to get the most detailed explanations you can of what is going on. Take scratch notes of your observations, and then write up the results. Remember, don't just describe what you observe, but analyze it according to what you know of these people and the context in which they live. From here on in, your field diary should consistently include the kinds of detailed observations and analysis that are part of fieldnote writing.

Assignment 4: Interview (10 points)

Conduct a semi-structured interview, based on an interview guide that you have prepared. Focus the interview around a set of themes related to questions of law, justice and rights in Bolivia, as we have been studying in this course. Take notes during the interview; recording is optional. Write a 3-5 page description of the content of your interview, an analysis of the themes discussed and their relationship to the themes of the course, and a reflection on the interview process itself.

Service Activities

A critical component of this program is the service-learning dimension. The philosophy of service-learning is that through engagement with people in the world, students can gain a much deeper understanding of social reality than through book learning alone, and can make meaningful contributions to improving the world around them. This program in engaged anthropology joins service to others with direct study of their lives and condition, to contribute to both the advancement of knowledge about a particular set of issues and problems. and direct intervention in helping people to confront those problems.

As mentioned above, we will be spending two to three periods each week in service and research activities in the communities where we will be studying. Service activities will be run through and coordinated by the Fundación Pro Justicia, in collaboration with Rutgers University. Individual service assignments will be made upon arrival in Cochabamba.